

and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

**Proclamation 6408 of March 4, 1992**

## **Irish-American Heritage Month, 1992**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

They trace their roots to "an isle of wondrous beauty," to a place "as kind as it is green." They are the more than 40 million Americans who claim Irish ancestry, and this month as communities across the country honor Saint Patrick, the beloved apostle of Ireland, our Nation joins in celebrating their rich heritage.

The distinct heritage of Irish immigrants and their descendants has long been a vibrant part of American history and culture. Sons and daughters of Erin were among the first colonists in America, and many played key roles in our Nation's struggle for independence. Nine of the men who signed our Declaration of Independence were of Irish origin, as was Commodore John Barry, the first naval commander commissioned by the Continental Congress. Another son of Ireland, Charles Thomson, served as the secretary of that body during all 15 years of its existence. Hailed as "the Sam Adams of Philadelphia, the life of the cause of liberty," Thomson labored to help keep the Continental Congress together until America's freedom had been won and a new government under the Constitution had been established. Scores of other Irish-Americans championed the cause of liberty through service in the Continental Army.

Although a significant number of Americans of Irish descent contributed to our Nation's independence, the largest wave of Irish immigration did not reach these shores until the mid-19th century. When a devastating potato blight in the late 1840s led to a series of crop failures and famine, well over a million Irish immigrants journeyed to this land of opportunity. Boston, New York, and other great cities grew with the influx of Irish labor, as did our Nation's railroads, metal trades, and mining communities. One historical portrait of Irish-Americans quotes a 19th-century journal as observing:

America demands for her development an inexhaustible fund of physical energy, and Ireland supplies the most part of it. There are several sorts of power working at the fabric of this Republic—waterpower, steam-power, and Irish-power. The last works hardest of all.

Such accounts of Irish industry and resolve are, today, inspiring. Yet we know that although it is as glorious as the ancient tales of Brian Boru and as rich as the fields that border the River Shannon, the Irish-American heritage includes its share of hardship.

While farming and other trades were difficult in Ireland, even before the "Black Forties," many 19th-century Irish immigrants faced hard and dangerous work in our Nation's mining towns and cities. The Irish

were no strangers to prejudice or discrimination either; they bore the brunt of the "Know-Nothing" nativist movement, and many felt the sting of signs posted by hiring employers that read: "No Irish Need Apply."

Characteristically, however, Irish-Americans proved to be more durable than the forces of bigotry and distrust—even the nickname "the fighting Irish," once used in derision, gradually became an expression of admiration and pride. With faith in Almighty God, with a strength rooted in love of family, and with full confidence in the promise of America, Irish immigrants and their descendants steadily achieved social and economic advancement. Well recognizing the virtues of democracy, Irish-Americans organized effectively at the grass-roots level and greatly increased their voice in government during the early part of this century. Moreover, as they had done since the earliest days of our Republic, the Irish home, school, and church together affirmed the importance of faith, industry, and learning. Thus, today we celebrate many outstanding contributions and achievements of Irish-Americans in virtually every sphere of our national life.

Although it spans more than three centuries of American history, the Irish-American heritage continues to flourish on this soil—as perennial as the "wearing o' the green." Annual Saint Patrick's Day events in the United States resonate with a deep and earnest affinity between the American and Irish peoples. In recent years, renewed immigration from Ireland has underscored the strong ties between our two countries.

The Congress, by House Joint Resolution 350, has designated March 1992 as "Irish-American Heritage Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 1992 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I invite all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

**Proclamation 6409 of March 5, 1992**

**National Day of Prayer, 1992**

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

We live during a time of great and historic change, a time that has seen the rise of newly democratic nations and the fall of once firmly entrenched totalitarian regimes. While such progress is cause for optimism and hope, the dramatic pace of global developments and the uncertainty they generate can also leave us with a faint sense of anticipation and unease. As we seek to chart a proper course in a world that is changing by the hour, our observance of a National Day of Prayer